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TAGS: [ECON](#) [PL](#) [KTFN](#) [EFIN](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: POLAND REQUESTS USG SUPPORT FOR FATF MEMBERSHIP

Classified By: Econ Couns Richard Rorvig for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary and Action request

11. (C) On February 11, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) called in the embassy to ask that the USG support Polish membership at the upcoming February 25-29 plenary meeting of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The MFA indicated that achieving FATF membership is a top priority for Poland in its effort to ramp up the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. Department is requested to provide post guidance regarding the status of Poland's membership application and the USG position.

Poland wants USG support for its FATF membership

12. (C) On February 11, Marian Siemakowicz, an official in the Polish Foreign Ministry's Security Policy Department responsible for terrorist financing issues, called in the embassy's terrorist financing officer to ask that the USG support Polish membership in FATF at the FATF plenary meeting on February 25-29. Siemakowicz said that Poland understands that FATF will decide on five new members at its the meeting. The MFA realizes China and India are likely to get priority for new membership spots. However, it would like to secure one of the remaining new positions. Siemakowicz said that Poland believes that it has met all FATF membership criteria and therefore hopes that it can count on US support. Poland expects the EU to support its applications. Post also understands that Polish Finance Minister Jan Vincent-Rostowski may raise the issue during a planned February 13 initial courtesy call by the Ambassador.

Poland's Preparation for Membership

13. (C) For several years Poland has been pushing for FATF membership, arguing that it has become one of the EU's regional leaders in the fight against terrorist financing and money laundering. Poland's preparation has included:

-- Playing an active role in the Council of Europe's MONEYVAL Committee. Poland scored favorably on MONEYVAL's 3rd Round Evaluation Report on Poland published on January 15, 2008. The report noted significant improvements across the board from its last on-site visit in 2002, including implementation of some of the EU's toughest legislation and reporting

requirements, and a considerable increase in Poland's number of convictions.

-- Becoming a member of the Schengen Pact in December 2007, and implementing stricter border procedures to combat money laundering and terrorism finance to comply with Schengen requirements. Poland now represents the EU's longest eastern border, directly abutting Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. No other EU country faces as many geographical challenges as Poland in combating money laundering and terrorism finance.

-- Becoming an observer in the Eurasian Group (EAG) to combat money laundering and terrorism finance in late Fall 2007. Poland has been an active member of the Egmont Group since 2002.

-- Hosting a regional money laundering conference in November 2007 attended by representatives from Financial Intelligence Units from 16 European countries as well as US Treasury advisors.

-- Providing assistance including training and materials to the Balkans, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Central Asia, and southeast Asia.

-- Hosting an embedded US treasury advisor with regional responsibilities in the Polish Finance Ministry's Financial Intelligence Unit. The advisor assisted the GOP to introduce state-of-the-art controls and training.

14. (C) The Poles also point out that they are one of the US' strongest allies in the fight against international terrorism, with major military deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. The GOP notes that it has adopted what may be the strictest financial controls in the region, based

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substantially on US examples and technical assistance. As a result, Poland argues that it is more open than many other EU members to the US point of view on financial regulatory and oversight issues. Poland's government shares the USG view that fighting terrorist financing and money laundering should be a top policy priority. The Polish Ministry of Finance's General Inspectorate for Financial Information (GIIF) and the MFA's Security Policy Department maintain excellent relationships with the Embassy, and have proven to be steadfast and reliable partners.

COMMENT

15. (C) In recent years, Poland has made significant progress in building a regulatory system to combat terrorist financing and money laundering and actively participates in several related international organizations. With the recent appointment of energetic new General Inspector of Financial Information (GIIF) Andrzej Parafinowicz, we expect improvements to continue. In many enforcement and regulatory matters, Poland is already ahead of most potential new FATF members and some existing members. Poland is one of only four EU members that is an OECD member but not a FATF member, though it is more active than many existing FATF members. The Poles feel that they have done everything FATF and the USG have asked them to do with regard to improving the regulatory infrastructure to prevent terrorist financing including playing a regional leadership role. The GOP sees achieving FATF membership as a point of pride and validation that their efforts are recognized by their peers.
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